

# The Advocate

## AND TOPEKA TRIBUNE.

OFFICIAL STATE PAPER.

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THE law requiring the commissioners to invest state school funds in securities of certain classes is a bad one and should be amended or repealed. There is not the least doubt that many thousands of these funds have been invested in securities of doubtful value.

A LATE issue of The People's Party Paper tells how the duty of \$6,000 on the diamonds presented by the Khedive of Egypt to a daughter of General Sherman, was remitted by act of congress. Tom Watson says that the only time old John Sherman even admitted that the tariff is a tax was when he was advocating the remission of this duty.

A YOUNG German who recently appeared before the military examining board to be examined for compulsory military service in the German army was found to have the words "Down with tyrants" tattooed across his breast. There was nothing to indicate who the tyrants were that were to be downed, but the authorities imagined the words referred to the emperor and the young man was arrested.

It is a fact of which good citizens will do well to take note that in all the references of republican and democratic papers to the late troubles in Colorado and South Carolina their condemnation extends only to the governors of those states who have been endeavoring to the best of their ability to perform the duties they have sworn to perform in the execution of the laws that are upon the statute books. These papers have uttered no word of disapproval of the gamblers and thieves against whom the efforts of Governor Waite were directed, or of the illegal liquor vendors and the bums and thugs of South Carolina who were engaged in the riotous demonstrations with which Governor Tillman had to contend.

### LABOR AND LABOR SAVING MACHINERY.

The Sunday edition of the Capital April 1, assails the position of the ADVOCATE that labor saving machinery has displaced labor, and is one of the causes of the enforced idleness of the present time. The Capital says:

The way labor-saving machinery has operated has been much more beneficial to society and every class of it. It has enabled one man to do perhaps twice the work he could do before. It has increased wages and cheapened goods. The people have been enabled to consume and use more goods and to increase the demand far beyond the mere population increase of the country, and as a consequence there has been a very large expansion of industry and the final result is that labor-saving machinery has given men work, not deprived men of work.

Now if the Capital desires to be fair in this discussion, it will do well to limit its criticisms to actual differences of opinion. We do not dispute that labor-saving machinery has cheapened goods and stimulated consumption, thereby increasing the demand beyond that which would result from increase of population. We do not question the advantages to be derived from the proper use of labor-saving machinery. We need waste no words therefore over these propositions. The question is, has society, as a whole, derived the benefits from the use of labor-saving machinery that it might have done under a different system? We think not. Under the prevailing system the capitalist has been the chief beneficiary. Suppose we admit, for the sake of the argument, that the wages of those who are employed to operate the machinery, have been increased. How does that help those whose services have been displaced by machinery? The Capital says "it has enabled one man to do perhaps twice the work he could do before." This shows the conception which the editor of the Capital has of the real situation. Carrol D. Wright in his report of the tenth census says:

It is quite impossible to arrive at an accurate statement as to the number of persons it would require under the individual system to produce the goods made by the present factory workers of this country, but by careful computations in some branches of work a rough estimate of the whole would indicate that each factory-system employs in 1882 represents, an average, of at least fifty employees under the individual system. Thus it would require about one hundred and fifty million persons working under the old system to produce the goods made by the three million or so factory workers of to-day. \* \* \* This estimate will hardly be disputed when it is considered that in spinning alone, eleven hundred threads are spun now at one time where one was spun under the old system.

As a further illustration of the effect of improved machinery we quote from the Minneapolis Times of March 10, showing the effect even of its limited adoption upon a single occupation in a single state. The Times says that out of 4,649 type-setters formerly employed in the state in offices that have since adopted machines, 2,036 have been thrown out of employment. Commenting upon this fact the Times says:

It may perhaps be assumed that compositors earned on an average \$15 a week, and supported three persons besides themselves.

If this allowance is just, it would appear that 7,114 persons have been deprived of a total income of \$3,540 weekly, or \$1,808,080 a year. \* \* \* It is clear that the net result has been to deprive a large number of skilled workmen permanently of their means of support. A few of the displaced printers find employment in other branches of their trade, but as these are already crowded, they can admit new members only at the cost of the old. The strongest and most fortunate will survive; the weakest will be crowded out, in accordance with the familiar law. For a time much suffering must ensue, nor will it be wholly abated until the displaced workmen shall have adapted themselves to the new order.

In the face of such facts, it is simple lunacy to claim that machinery does not displace men in modern production. We ask our readers to reflect also upon the extent of this displacement. According to Carrol D. Wright, it would have required about three times the total population of the country when he wrote that statement, including men, women and children, to produce by the old system what the three millions of operatives under our factory system actually produced at that time. Is it any wonder that millions of men are idle? The Capital says that machinery "has been much more beneficial to society, and every class of it." Has it? Has it been beneficial to the men whose labor it has displaced?

Now, we think it may be fairly questioned whether the use that has been made of machinery has been beneficial to society as a whole. *The interests of society as a whole demand the greatest possible good to all the members of it.* We lay this proposition down as an axiom. The interests of society, then, demand that every member of it shall have an equal opportunity in life. This may also be regarded as an axiom. This leads us to the proposition laid down in the former article which the Capital has undertaken to criticize—that when a labor-saving machine was invented, instead of using it to displace men, it should have been used to reduce the hours of labor, thereby continuing the opportunities of all to provide the comforts and the luxuries of life for every member of society.

In our former article, where, for the purpose of an illustration, we supposed a machine to be invented capable of doing the work of ten men, and said that the ten men should still have been permitted to do that work, each working one-tenth of his former time, the Capital regards the proposition as "a little the most fantastical scheme that 'reform' has yet given us to prove its utter incapacity to comprehend modern conditions." Nevertheless, we stand by the proposition, and it is our comprehension of "modern conditions" that makes us do so. We do not, like the Capital, regard our "modern conditions" as the highest and best of which society is capable. We believe in the possibility of human progress. We believe that "modern conditions" can be improved. The Capital does not. It is one of the clogs that have ever stood in the way of human progress.

Now, we would ask reasonable men and women to compare "modern conditions" as they are with what they

might be under a properly-managed industrial and social system. There is no complaint under our "modern conditions" that there is not enough of everything produced to supply every man, woman and child with an abundance. In fact, the Capital insists that there is an overproduction. Let us admit, for our present purpose, that there is more of everything produced than the necessities of the people require. The fact that all are not supplied, then, shows that there is something wrong in our system. The Capital attributes the want in the country to "laziness, drunkenness and incompetency." It is hardly necessary to waste words upon such an absurd claim. While it cannot and will not be disputed that laziness, drunkenness and incompetency exist, it is, nevertheless, a fact that even these are, to a large extent, the direct result of the unequal opportunities of life. Admitting, for the sake of argument, that the drunkard and the lazy and incompetent are the natural outgrowth of human depravity, and they still constitute so small a part of those who are deprived of the comforts and luxuries of life as to be of small consideration. Look at the multitudes who have been but recently thrown out of employment, and whose families have been destitute in consequence. The columns of the daily press have been constantly filled with such accounts. They have told of the desperation resulting from want consequent upon enforced idleness, which has led in many instances to suicide, and in not a few, to the murder of whole families to save them from death by starvation. It is cruel, it is inhuman, to attribute these conditions to laziness, drunkenness and incompetency. They are the natural product of a false and vicious system by which the few grow rich beyond all human need, and the many are doomed to eternal poverty and want. One of the causes of this "modern condition" is the monopoly of machinery and other means of production and distribution by which the few are benefited and the many are deprived of fair opportunities in life.

Contrast this "modern condition" with what might be attained by a proper use of the instrumentalities of modern production and distribution. Suppose, as we propose, that machinery instead of being used to displace labor, were used to diminish the hours that each should be employed. This would apply to the farmer, as well as to the man who works in the shop, under a proper distribution of labor. Under such a system, no one who has the disposition to work would need to be idle, and there would then be some justice in the censure of those who *should remain idle* and those who should be guilty of petty crimes. Now such censure is cruelty. It indicates, not simply a lack of understanding of the inevitable consequences of our "modern conditions," but a lack of humanity as well.

Under such an industrial and social system as should be attained in this nineteenth century of human development and progress there